

Correspondence.

THE DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENT OF SMALL VILLAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—There is one branch of building which demands the serious attention of architects at present, and which appears to be overlooked and neglected by most of them: I allude to the internal arrangement of the domestic offices in small villas, cottage-ornées, and the various ornamental residences which are so numerous in the suburbs of the metropolis. In mansions and villas of the first class, this department of building is generally well attended to, and every requisite convenience is afforded to the housekeeper and domestics in the shape of kitchens, still-rooms, stores, pantries, &c. &c., but in villas of a more humble character, where the lady is her own housekeeper, and perhaps not more than two, or at most three, servants are kept, a sacrifice of the domestic convenience is too frequently made in order to add to the appearance and effect of the entrance-hall, staircase, and principal apartments. Some months since I was visiting a lady who had just removed into a very pretty little villa erected for her residence under the superintendence of one of the leading architects of the present day. The site of the building was a beautiful one; a gently rising ground, commanding extensive views from three sides, over one of the most beautiful counties in England. The exterior of the villa was exceedingly pretty, in the Tudor cottage style, with ornamental verge-boards, pendants, &c. The interior, as far as the entrance and the principal rooms went, was also quite in keeping with the character and style of the building; but in the domestic department I found it quite the reverse, and the lady assured me that it was one of the most uncomfortable houses she had lived in, adding, that without detracting from the abilities of the architect, she still thought that had he consulted her taste upon the arrangement of a department which so especially came under her notice, it would not have been so. 1st, There was no back-staircase to the chamber-story, and from the arrangement of the building it was impossible to get one, without building it on the exterior. This was a glaring error, as perhaps nothing else so much contributes to the real comfort of a house as two staircases, one public the other private. 2ndly, The door into the garden, was so placed that, should the kitchen door happen to be open, a person upon entering from the garden could see, and be seen by every one in the kitchen; this was pointed out to me as a very great annoyance. 3rdly, There was no pantry convenient for the use of the dining-room, so that the wine and dessert were obliged either to be brought from a distant part of the house, or to be placed upon the sideboard during dinner; this was certainly a great oversight. 4thly, There was not a single place which the lady could use as a still-room and store. This, she seemed to feel, was the greatest mistake of all, and from the arrangement of the house it was impossible to give her the conveniences which she required without spoiling the dining-room and back lobby. I have mentioned these as the principal defects in the arrangements, though there were several others of minor importance and I have myself so frequently seen other houses of this class similarly inconvenienced, that I am certain it is a common case. My sole reason for bringing it before the public is, to draw the attention of architects to the important fact, that upon the good arrangement of the domestic offices, depends the great comforts of a dwelling-house, and that no additional extent, or effect, in the arrangement of the principal rooms can warrant them in making a sacrifice of them.

In conclusion, I venture to suggest, that were a design shewn and explained to the lady of the house previous to its erection, I have no doubt that many valuable hints would be given by her to the architect, as it is a department so exclusively her own, and therefore she must be the best judge of what is really required for its convenience and comfort. I shall perhaps at some future opportunity resume this subject, and give my own ideas upon it, in the shape of a ground-plan for a small villa residence.

EDWARD MANFRED.

HOUSE DRAINS.

SIR,—I have no idea who Mr. John Phillips is, who tells us in your last number that he has "ventured to throw together a few thoughts," but I shall be disappointed if his ability and modesty do not obtain more than mere respect.

If Mr. Phillips will permit one or two suggestions by an extensive manufacturer, they would be, first, whether his rule for determining thickness of earthen drain-tubes ought to apply arbitrarily in all cases, seeing that of tiles similar in dimensions some would bear a pressure of cent. per cent. (yes, and possibly five or ten times repeated) more than others? Secondly, whether his method of uniting them at the joints is practicable, and the best which may be devised?

Manufacturers are aware of the risk, when tubes are cut at the ends, both as to twisting and breakage; a weakness from which they are never free after the processes of forming, dressing, and firing are over. Would it not be better to leave the tiles perfect and square at both ends, and make them to fit almost air-tight? Then as regards an over-lap, either form one end of each tube with a raised ring, or let one be supplied separately for each joint. As the tiles would shut upon each other, would not a little good stopping at the ends form the security of the joint, and render it a question of secondary importance what the socket or outer ring were filled up with? Thirdly, as respects glazing the inner surface, would it not be more satisfactory to use a material which either partially glazes over the surface naturally or sufficiently smooth, of proved durability and strength. (and there is no lack of such), rather than adopt artificial glaze upon an exceedingly porous, weak, and perishing body?—Your obedient servant,

THOMAS PRANK.

22, Water-lane, Fleet-street, 3rd Dec., 1844.

[Our correspondent's observations relative to the thickness of pipes are just, and having occurred to us, we stated them to the author. We also made the same objections to their jointing. To be secure the pipes must fit into each other; and to have sufficient strength, must have overlaps of the same thickness at least as the substance of the pipe. If not so inserted at their joints, they would become so deranged, as to create by their irregularity a succession of internal stoppages.—Ed.]

MARQUETRY.

SIR,—Allow me to inform your *Ellesmere* Subscriber from the commencement that the construction and application of marquetry are fully and accurately described in two communications inserted in the ninth volume of the *Mechanics' Magazine*, No. 242, pp. 169, 170, and 171, the one from Henry Provis, Sherington, Bucks, and the other from your humble servant.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

CHRISTOPHER DAVY.

3, Farnival's-inn, 3rd Dec. 1844.

MATERIAL FOR BRICKS.

SIR,—Having an immense quantity of solid deposit (which I take to be a mixture of clay and mud) opposite to my villa, on the banks of the Thames, I shall be most happy to bear part of the expense of removing the same, should any speculator be bold enough to enter upon the experiment of trying his hand in converting it into bricks; a suggestion which I really think more worthy of attention than many other schemes now afloat.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Z.

DRAWING INSTRUMENT.

SIR,—I have taken in *THE BUILDER* some time, and wish to ask you a question, hoping it will be answered. Do you, or any of your correspondents, know any thing about an instrument to draw lines to an inaccessible vanishing point? If so, your answer in next week's *BUILDER* will oblige.

G. N.

[There are; for ordinary purposes. The stock of a drawing square may be made with a circular curved piece of wood attached to it, which may be worked round another piece of wood fixed to the side of the drawing-board, and in its motion round, the blade of the square will produce perspective lines tending to a vanishing point.—Ed.]

* In foundations, arches, and the like, some bricks easily crush; while there are others—for instance, such as Mr. Telford used ten millions of in the Harecastle tunnel,—that never fail.

STAINED GLASS.

SIR,—Will you or any of your readers be so good as to inform me of the best works on stained glass, with their prices, suitable to a person in the glazing business, and to a student in the arrangement of stained glass in windows of different sizes?—You will oblige, yours, &c. &c.,

A CONSTANT READER.

Preston, November 29th, 1844.

ORNAMENTAL CAST-IRON ROOFINGS AND PROCESS OF GLASS-STAINING.

SIR,—Can you inform me if ornamental cast-iron roofings have been used in any church instead of wooden frame-work of olden time? It appears to me that such material would conduce much to the lightness of a building, economy of purse, and to beauty of structure.

I am anxious to emblazon upon glass some heraldic ornaments. If you or any of your correspondents will furnish me with the process, and also give me an insight into the colours and oils used, I shall be greatly obliged. Having been one of the first readers of your excellent journal, I hope you will insert my questions.—Yours, &c.

AN AMATEUR.

London, Nov. 26th, 1844.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION.

THE CHORISTERS' SCHOOL, MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

SIR,—My attention has been this morning directed to the following paragraph of an anonymous letter in your last *BUILDER*, headed "Architectural Competition—The Choristers' School, Magdalen College, Oxford:—"

"Mr. Derick, who sends in his designs at least two weeks after the time specified, is appointed to carry out his designs, he being a resident in Oxford, and having access (as any one had who was taken in by a member of the college) to the room where all the drawings already sent in were exhibited."

Now, Sir, these words convey something very like an insinuation, it is therefore only fair to state that up to this very moment Mr. Derick has never had a single glance at any one of the numerous designs intrusted to my care, and laid before the college for its decision, and I may truly say that Mr. Derick had no facility or advantage allowed him which had been refused to any other competitor.

To the erroneous statements in the same anonymous letter, I think it quite unnecessary to trouble you with a contradiction.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. R. BLOXHAM, the Bursar of Magdalen College.

December 4th, 1844.

BUILDING COMPETITION AND UNPROFESSIONAL JUDGES.

SIR,—Under this head appear, in the last number of your truly excellent and independent publication, a few observations addressed by Mr. James Knight, in reference to the public competition for the proposed foot-bridge over the Old River in the Hackney marshes, wherein he very justly expresses his "astonishment and annoyance" at the unlooked-for decision come to by the board on the evening of their opening the tenders of the several competitors for the work in question. Believe me, if it can at all lessen the feelings of disappointment and surprise experienced either by Mr. Knight himself or his fellow-builders in the affair, at the result of their competition, I can assure them they have in me a most zealous sympathiser, for I do most sincerely declare that my amazement on the announcement of the chairman, when admitted into the room along with (not anterior to them) the several competing parties, that the board had come to the resolution not to have the work done at all, was quite equal to Mr. Knight's; and why they came to such a determination I really am at a loss to conceive, certainly not because they were taken by surprise at the amount of Mr. Knight's tender, for it was under the estimated sum which I had previously supposed the works would amount to, and therefore they must have been prepared for it.

The board were forewarned of the unfitness of the season for the performance of such a work in so peculiar a locality; but then it was thought by them not to be impracticable.